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AN EPISTLE TO DR. SHEBBEARE:

TO WHICH IS ADDED

AN ODE TO SIR FLETCHER NORTON,

IN IMITATION OF HORACE, ODE VIII. BOOK IV.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THOUGH I look upon this Poem, in point of elevation of diction and ſublimity of ſentiment, to be as highly heroical, as my Epiſtle to Sir William Chambers, yet I have not thought proper to add that epithet to it on the title-page. I am willing to wiſh that firſt production of my muſe may preſerve the diſtinction which it now poſſeſſes, of being called *The* Heroic Epiſtle, *par excellence*. Beſides this conſideration, the different ranks of the two perſons, to whom theſe two works are addreſſed, require a difference to be made in this matter; and it would be unpardonable in me not to diſcriminate between a Comptroller of his Majeſty's Works, and the Hackney Scribbler of a Newſpaper; between a Placeman and a Penſioner, a Knight of the Polar Star, and a broken Apothecary.

AN

EPISTLE

TO

DR. SHEBBEARE.

O For a thouſand tongues! and every tongue
Like Johnſon's, arm'd with words of ſix feet long,
In multitudinous vociferation
To panegyricize this glorious nation,
Whoſe liberty reſults from her taxation.

Ver. 2. *Words of ſix feet long.*] Seſquipedalia verba. Hor.

O, for that paſſive, penſionary ſpirit,
That by its proſtitution proves its merit!
That reſts on RIGHT DIVINE, all regal claims,
And gives to George, whate'er it gave to James:
Then ſhould my Tory numbers, old Shebbeare,
Tickle the tatter'd fragment of thy ear!
Then all that once was virtuous, wiſe, or brave,
That quell'd a tyrant, that abhorr'd a ſlave,
Then Sydney's, Ruſſel's patriot fame ſhould fall,
Beſmear'd with mire, like black Dalrymple's gall,
Then, like thy proſe, ſhould my felonious verſe
Tear each immortal plume from Naſſau's hearſe,
That modern monarchs, in that plumage gay,
Might ſtare and ſtrut, the peacocks of a day.
But I, like Anſty, feel myſelf unfit
To run, with hollow ſpeed, two heats of wit.

Ver. 11. *Tickle the tatter'd fragment.*] Churchill, in alluding to this *capital* anecdote in our Doctor's life, ſays, in his poem called The Author,

The whole intent
Of that parade, was fame, not puniſhment.

Intimating that his ears received no detriment in the pillory. My line intimates, that they did. However, if my intimation be falſe, it is eaſily refuted: the Doctor has only to expoſe his ears again to the public, and the real fact will be flagrant.

He, at firſt ſtarting, won both fame and money,
The betts ran high on Bladud's Ciceronè;
Since diſtanc'd quite, like a gall'd jade he winces,
And laſhes unknown prieſts, and praiſes well-known princes.
So I, when firſt I tun'd th' heroic lay,
Gain'd Pownall's praiſe, as well as Almon's pay.
In me the nation plac'd its tuneful hope,
Its ſecond Churchill, or at leaſt its Pope:
Proudly I prick'd along, Sir William's ſquire,
Bade kings recite my ſtrains and queens admire;
Chaſte maids of honour prais'd my ſtout endeavour,
Sir Thomas ſwore "The fellow was damn'd clever."

Ver. 23. *Bladud's Ciceronè.*] Anglice, Bath Guide.

Ver. 25. *Laſhes unknown prieſts.*] Without a note poſterity will never underſtand this line. Two or three years ago this gentleman found himſelf libelled in a newſpaper; and on ſuſpecting a certain clergyman to be the author, he wrote a firſt canto of a poem, called The Prieſt Diſſected, in which he prepared all chirurgical matters previous to the operation. In the mean time the parſon proved an *alibi*, and ſaved his bacon. To this firſt and unique canto the author prefixed a ſomething in which he exculpated himſelf from being the author of the Heroic Epiſtle, which it ſeems had been laid to his charge during the time the clan of Macgreggors continued without a name, and which, as the world well knows, was the only reaſon which prevented me from claiming the merit of that production. It is to this ſomething, that the latter part of the line alludes. For in it he had told the public, that his Majeſty had ten children, which it knew very well before. Hence the epithet *well-known*.

Ver. 33. *Sir Thomas.*] The Petronius of the preſent age needs not the addition of a ſirname to make the world certain who is meant by this appellative.

But

But popularity, alas! has wings,
And flits as ſoon from poets as from kings.
My pompous Poſtſcript found itſelf diſdain'd
As much as Milton's Paradiſe regain'd——
And when I dar'd the Patent Snuffers handle,
To trim, with Pinchy's aid, Old England's candle,
The lyric muſe, ſo lame was her condition,
Could hardly hop beyond a third edition.
Yes, 'tis a general truth, and ſtrange as true,
(Kenrick ſhall prove it in his next Review)
That no one bard, in theſe degenerate days,
Can write two works deſerving equal praiſe.
Whether the matter of which minds are made
Be grown of late mephitic and decay'd,
Or wants phlogiſton, I forbear to ſay,
The problem's more in Doctor Prieſtley's way.
He knows of ſpirit the material whole,
For Prieſtley has the cure of Sh-lb---e's ſoul.

Ver. 51. *The cure of Sh-lb---e's ſoul.*] It is not here inſinuated, that the ſoul in queſtion wants curing. The word *cure* is here put for *care*, in the ſenſe in which eccleſiaſtical lawyers uſe *cura animarum*.

Enough of ſouls, unleſs we waſte a line,
Shebbeare! to pay a compliment to thine:
Which forg'd, of old, of ſtrong Hibernian braſs,
Shines through the Paris plaiſter of thy face,
And bronzes it, ſecure from ſhame, or ſenſe,
To the flat glare of finiſh'd impudence.
Wretch! that from Slander's filth art ever gleaning,
Spite without ſpirit, malice without meaning:
The ſame abuſive, baſe, abandon'd thing,
When pilloried, or penſion'd by a King.
Old as thou art, methinks, 'twere ſage advice,
That N--th ſhould call thee off from hunting Price.
Some younger blood-hound of his bawling pack
Might ſorer gall his preſbyterian back.
Thy toothleſs jaws ſhould free thee from the fight;
Thou canſt but mumble, when thou mean'ſt to bite.
Say, then, to give a *requiem* to thy toils,
What if my muſe array'd her in thy ſpoils?
And took the field for thee, thro' pure good-nature;
Courts prais'd by thee, are curs'd beyond her ſatire.

Ver. 63. *From hunting Price.*] See a ſeries of wretched letters, written by Shebbeare, in the Public Advertiſer, and other papers.

Yet, when ſhe pleaſes, ſhe can deal in praiſe:
Exempli gratia, hear her fluent lays
Extol the preſent, the propitious hour,
When Europe, trembling at Britannia's power,
Bids all her princes, with pacific care,
Keep neutral diſtance, while ſhe wings the war
Croſs the Atlantic vaſt; in dread array,
Herſelf to vanquiſh in America.
Where ſoon, we truſt, the brother chiefs ſhall ſee
The Congreſs pledge them in a cup of tea,
Toaſt peace and plenty to their mother nation,
Give three huzzas to George and to taxation,
And beg, to make their loyal hearts the lighter,
He'd ſend them o'er Dean T--k-r, with a mitre.
In Fancy's eye, I ken them from afar
Circled with feather wreaths, unſtain'd by tar:
In place of laurels, theſe ſhall bind their brow,
Fame, honour, virtue, all are feathers now.
Ev'n beauty's ſelf, unfeather'd, if we ſpy,
Is hideous to our Macaroni eye.

Fooliſh the bard, who, in ſuch flimſy times,
Would load with ſatire or with ſenſe his rhymes:

No, let my numbers flutter light in air,
As careleſs as the ſilken Goſſimer.
Or ſhould I, playful, lift the muſe's ſcourge,
Thy cocks ſhould lend their tails, my Cocking G----,
To make the rod. So fear not thou the ſong;
To whip a poſt, I ne'er will waſte a thong.
Were I inclin'd to puniſh courtly tools,
I'd laſh the knaves before I flapt the fools.
Gigantic vice ſhould on my ordeal burn,
Long ere it came to thy poor pigmy turn.

But ſure 'tis beſt, whate'er raſh Whigs may ſay,
To ſleep within a whole ſkin, while one may;
For Whigs are mighty prone to run ſtark mad,
If credence in A--hb----ps may be had.
Therefore I'll keep within diſcretion's rule,
And turn true Tory of the M------d ſchool.
So ſhall I 'ſcape that creature's tyger paw,
Which ſome call Liberty, and ſome call Law:

Ver. 97. *My cocking G---.*] A great cock-fighter, and little ſenator, who, in the laſt Parliament, called the Heroic Poſtſcript a libel.

Ver. 111. *Which ſome call Liberty.*] With courtiers and churchmen the terms are ſynonimous. See a late Sermon.

Whoſe whale-like mouth is of that ſavage ſhape,
Whene'er his long-rob'd ſhewman bids him gape,
With tuſks ſo ſtrong, with grinders ſo tremendous,
And ſuch a length of gullet, Heaven defend us!
That ſhould you peep into the red-raw track,
'Twould make your cold fleſh creep upon you back.
A maw like that, what mortal may withſtand?
'Twould ſwallow all the poets in the land.

Come, then, Shebbeare! and hear thy bard deliver
Unpaid-for praiſes to thy penſion-giver.
Hear me, like T--k-r, ſwear, "ſo help me, muſe!"
I write not for preferment's golden views.
But hold—'tis on thy province to intrude:
I would be loyal, but would not be rude.
To thee, my veteran, I his fame conſign;
Take thou St. James's, be St. Stephen's mine.

Hail, genial hotbed! whoſe prolific ſoil
So well repays all North's perennial toil,

Ver. 122. *Like T--k-r ſwear.*] The reverend Dean took a ſolemn oath in one of his late pamphlets, that he would not be a biſhop.

Whence

Whence he can raiſe, if want or whim inclines,
A crop of votes, as plentiful as pines.
Wet-nurſe of tavern-waiters and Nabobs,
That empties firſt, and after fills their fobs:
(As Pringle, to procure a ſane ſecretion,
Purges the *primæ viæ* of repletion.)
What ſcale of metaphor ſhall Fancy raiſe,
To climb the heights of thy ſtupendous praiſe?

Thrice has the ſun commenc'd his annual ride,
Since full of years and praiſe, thy mother died.
'Twas then I ſaw thee, with exulting eyes,
A ſecond phœnix, from her aſhes riſe;
Mark'd all the graces of thy loyal creſt,
Sweet with the perfume of its parent neſt.
Rare chick! How worthy of all court careſſes,
How ſoft, how echo-like, it chirp'd addreſſes.
Proceed, I cry'd, thy full-fledg'd plumes unfold,
Each true-blue feather ſhall be tipt with gold;
Ordain'd thy race of future fame to run,
To do, whate'er thy mother left undone.
In all her ſmooth, obſequious paths proceed,
For, know, poor Oppoſition wants a head.

With horn and hound her truant ſchoolboys roam,
And for a fox-chace quit St. Stephen's dome,
Forgetful of their grandfire Nimrod's plan,
" A mighty hunter, but his prey was man."
The reſt, at crouded Almacks, nightly bett,
To ſtretch their own beyond the nation's debt.
Vote then ſecure; the needful millions raiſe,
That fill the privy-purſe with means and ways.
And do it quickly too, to ſhew your breeding,
The weazel Scots are hungry, and want feeding.
Nor need ye wait for that more plenteous ſeaſon,
When mad America is brought to reaſon.
Obſequious Ireland, at her ſiſter's claim,
(Siſter or ſtep-dame, call her either name)
Shall pour profuſely her Pactolian tide,
Nor leave her native patriots unſupply'd.

Ver. 155. *A mighty hunter.*] A line of Mr. Pope's. If our younger ſenators would take the hint, and now and then hunt a miniſter inſtead of a fox, they might perhaps find ſome fun in it.

Ver. 161. *The weaſel Scots.*] It is not I, but Shakeſpeare, that gives my countrymen this epithet. See Hen. V. act 1. ſcene 2.

For once the eagle England *being in prey*,
To her unguarded neſt the *weazel* Scot
Comes ſneaking, and ſo ſucks her princely eggs, &c.

Earl N----t ſung, while yet but ſimple Clare,
That wretched Ireland had no gold to ſpare.
How couldſt thou, ſimple Clare! that iſle abuſe,
Which prompts and pays thy linſey-woolſey muſe?
Miſtaken peer! Her treaſures near can ceaſe,
Did ſhe not long pay Viry for our peace?
Say, did ſhe not, till rang the royal knell,
Irradiate veſtal Majeſty at Zell?

Ver. 168. *Earl N----t ſung.*] The intellect not only of poſterity, but of the preſent reader, muſt here again be enlightened by a note: for this ſong was ſung above two years ago, and is conſequently forgotten. Yet if the reader will pleaſe to recollect how eaſily I brought to life Sir William Chambers's proſe diſſertation which had been dead half that time, he will, I hope, give me credit for being able to recover this dead poem from oblivion alſo. It was ſent to her Majeſty on her birth-day, with a preſent of Iriſh grogram; and the newſpaper of the day ſaid (but I know not how truly) that the Queen was graciouſly pleaſed to thank the noble author for both his pieces of *ſtuff*. The poet's exordium ſeemed to have been taken from that very Ode in Horace which I have alſo attempted to imitate in this pamphlet. It began by aſſuring her Majeſty, that Ireland was too poor to preſent her with a piece of gold plate.

Could poor Ierne gifts afford,
Worthy the conſort of her lord,
Of pureſt gold a ſculpter'd frame
Juſt emblem of her zeal ſhould flame.

This ſuppoſed poverty of his native country ſtruck me at the time as a mere *gratis-dictum*. I have therefore, from verſe 180 to verſe 186 of this epiſtle, endeavoured to refute it, for the honour of Ireland.

Sure

Sure then ſhe might afford, to my poor thinking,
One golden tumbler, for Queen Charlotte's drinking.
I care not, if her hinds on fens and rocks,
Ne'er roaſt one ſhoulder of their fatted flocks,
Shall Iriſh hinds to mutton make pretenſions?
Be theirs potatoes, and be ours their penſions.
If they refuſe, great North, by me adviſ'd,
Enact, that each potatoe be excis'd.

Ah! hadſt thou, North, adopted this ſage plan,
And ſcorn'd to tax each Britiſh ſerving-man,
Thy friend Macgreggor, when he came to town,
(As poets ſhould do) in his chaiſe and one,
Had ſeen his foot-boy Sawney, once his pride,
On ſtunt Scotch poney trotting by his ſide,
With frock of fuſtian, and with cape of red,
Nor grudg'd the guinea tax'd upon his head,
But tuſh, I heed not—for my country's good
I'll pay it—it will purchaſe Yankee blood—

Ver. 178.] *I care not*, &c.] Alluding to theſe lines in the ſame poem:

Where ſtarving hinds from fens and rocks,
View paſtures rich with herds and flocks.
And only view---forbid to taſte, &c.

And in a note on the paſſage, he tells us that theſe hinds never eat animal food; but ſays not one word about potatoes, that moſt nutritious of all aliments, which is ſurely very diſingenuous.

And

And well I ween, for this heroic lay,
Almon will give me wherewithal to pay.

Tax then, ye greedy miniſters, your fill:
No matter, if with ignorance or ſkill.
Be ours to pay, and that's an eaſy taſk,
In theſe bleſt times to have is but to aſk.
Ye know, whate'er is from the public preſt,
Will ſevenfold ſink into your private cheſt.
For he, the nurſing father, that receives,
Full freely tho' he takes, as freely gives.
So when great Cox, at his mechanic call,
Bids orient pearls from golden dragons fall,
Each little dragonet, with brazen grin,
Gapes for the precious prize, and gulps it in.
Yet when we peep behind the magic ſcene,
One maſter-wheel directs the whole machine:
The ſelf-ſame pearls, in nice gradation, all
Around one common centre, riſe and fall.

Ver. 211. *Around one common centre.*] I was let into this ſecret by my late patron, Sir William Chambers; who, as Mr. Cox's automata were very much in the Chineſe taſte, was very curious to diſcover their mechaniſm. I muſt do the Knight the juſtice to own that ſome of my beſt things are borrowed from him.

Thus may our ſtate-muſeum long ſurpriſe;
And what is ſunk by votes in bribes ariſe;
Till mock'd and jaded with the puppet-play,
Old England's genius turns with ſcorn away,
Aſcends his ſacred bark, the ſails unfurl'd,
And ſteers his ſtate to the wide weſtern world:
High on the helm majeſtic Freedom ſtands,
In act of cold contempt ſhe waves her hands.
Take, ſlaves, ſhe cries, the realms that I diſown,
Renounce your birth-right, and deſtroy my throne.

FINIS.

ODE

TO SIR FLETCHER NORTON,

IN IMITATION

OF

HORACE,

ODE VIII. BOOK IV.

Q. HORATII FLACCI, CARMEN VIII. LIB. IV.

DONAREM pateras,[a] grataque commodus,
Cenſorine, meis æra ſodalibus:
Donarem tripodas, præmia fortium
Graiorum: *neque tu peſſima munerum,*
Ferres, divite me ſcilicet artium,
Quas aut[b] *Parrhaſius protulit, aut Scopas;*
Hic ſaxo, liquidis ille coloribus
Solers[c] *nunc hominem ponere, nunc deum.*

Sed

HORACE, ODE VIII. BOOK IV.

IMITATED.

MUSE! were we rich in land, or ſtocks,
We'd ſend Sir Fletcher a [a] gold box;
Who lately, to the world's ſurprize,
Advis'd his Sovereign to be wiſe.
The zeal of cits ſhou'd ne'er ſurpaſs us,
We'd make him ſpeaker of Parnaſſus.
Or could I boaſt the mimic eye
Of [b] Townſhend, or of Bunbury,
Whoſe art can catch, in comic guiſe,
" The manners living as they riſe,"
And find it the ſame eaſy thing
To [c] hit a Jollux or a king;
I'd hangings weave, in fancy's loom,
For Lady Norton's dreſſing room.

Line 12. *A Jollux.*] A phraſe uſed by the *bon ton* for a fat parſon. See a ſet of excellent Caricatures publiſhed by Bretherton, in New Bond-Street.

Sed [d] *non hæc mihi vis; nec* [e] *tibi talium*

Res eſt aut *animus deliciarum egens.*

Gaudes carminibus: [f] *carmina poſſumus*

Donare, [g] *& pretium dicere muneri.*

Non [h] inciſa *notis* marmora *publicis,*

Per [i] quæ *ſpiritus & vita redit bonis*

Poſt mortem ducibus: [k] non *celeres fugæ,*

Rejectæque retrorſum *Annibalis minæ,*

Non incendia Carthaginis *impiæ,*

Ejus, qui domitâ nomen ab Africâ

Lucratus rediit, clarius indicant

Ver. 11. *Guades carminibus.*] The imitator found himſelf obliged to deviate in this place a little further from his original, than perhaps the ſtrict critic will tolerate. But as he was not quite ſo certain of Sir Fletcher's fondneſs for poetry, as Horace ſeems to have been about the taſte of Cenſorinus, he thought it beſt to expreſs himſelf with a modeſt diffidence on that ſubject.

Laudes,

But [d] arts like theſe I don't purſue,
Nor [e] does Sir Fletcher heed virtù.
Enough for me in theſe hard times,
When ev'ry thing is tax'd but rhymes,
To [f] tag a few of theſe together:
Tho' I am quite uncertain, whether
My verſe will much rejoice the knight,
As [g] great a ſtore as I ſet by't.
For verſe, (I'd have Sir Fleteher know it)
When written by a genuine poet,
Has more of meaning and intent,
Than [h] modern acts of Parliament.

'Tis [i] fit and right, when heroes die,
The nation ſhould a tomb ſupply;
Yet, not the votes of both the houſes,
Without th' aſſiſtance of the muſes,
Can give that permanence of fame
That heroes from their country claim.
And tell me pray, to our good King,
What fame our preſent broils can bring,
Ev'n [k] ſhould the Howes (which ſome folks doubt)
Put Waſhington to total rout,

Laudes, quam *Calabræ*, *Pierides*: neque

Si chartæ ſileant quod benè feceris

Mercedem tuleris.

Quid foret Iliæ

Mavortiſque [m] *puer*, ſi taciturnitas

Obſtaret meritis invida Romuli?

Ereptum [o] *ſtygius fluctibus Æacum*

Virtus, & favor, & [n] *lingua potentium*

Vatum divitibus conſecrat inſulis.

Dignum laude virum Muſa [p] *vetat mori*,

Cælo

Unleſs his treaſurer in an ode,
Exalt the victor to a god.

A man, I know, may get a penſion
Without the muſe's intervention?
Yet what are penſions to the praiſe
Wrapt up in [l] Caledonian lays?
Say, Johnſon! where had been [m] Fingal,
But for Macpherſon's great aſſiſtance?
The chieftain had been nought at all,
A non-exiſting non-exiſtence.
Mac, like a [n] poet ſtout and good,
Firſt [o] plung'd, then pluck'd him from oblivion's flood,
And bad him bluſter at his eaſe,
Among the fruitful Hebrides.
A [p] common poet can revive
The man who once has been alive:
But Mac revives, by magic power,
The man who never liv'd before.

Such

Ver. 37. *Unleſs his treaſurer.*] The late promotion of a poet to the treaſurerſhip of the houſhold, muſt neceſſarily give to all true votaries of the muſes (as it does to me) great delectation. 'Tis whiſpered, by ſome people in the ſecret, that the very pacific caſt of the Laureat's birth-day ode, occaſioned the

Cælo [q] *Muſa beat.* Sic [r] *Jovis* intereſt

Optatis epulis impiger Hercules:

Clarum [s] *Tyndaridæ ſidus* ab infimis

Quaſſas [t] eripiunt æquoribus *rates:*

Ornatus viridi tempora pampino

Liber [u] *vota* bonos ducit ad exitus.

11 7 19

FINIS.

Such *hocus-pocus* tricks, I own,
Belong to Gallic bards alone.
My [q] muſe would think her power enough,
Could ſhe make ſome folks fever-proof;
Dub them immortal from their birth,
And give them all their heaven on earth,
Then [r] Doctor K—, that broad divine,
With lords and dukes ſhould ever dine;
Poſt, prate, and preach, for years on years,
And puff himſelf in Gazetteers.
Sandwich for aye, ſhould ſhine the ſtar,
Propitious to our naval war;
Caulk all our veſſels' [t] leaky ſides,
And in the docks work double ties.
While Stormont, [u] grac'd with ribband green,
Keeps France from mixing in the riot,
Till [w] Britain's lion vents his ſpleen,
And tears his rebel whelps in quiet.

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